Situational Leadership

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This article examines the effect of the recently updated U.S. Army Field Manual 22-100,* Army Leadership*, on situational leadership theory. It reviews the development of adaptive leadership models and theory and considers how refinements in situational leadership theory might affect combat leaders in today's contemporary operating environment.

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP in today's Army is increasingly important with technological changes and the force-structure downsizing that all military services are experiencing. Adaptive leadership is necessary in today's complex and ambiguous military environment. Technology and the availability and flow of information contribute to a very fluid operational situation.[1] US Army Field Manual (FM) 22-100, *Army Leadership,* has added transactional and transformational leadership styles of directing, participating, and delegating.[2] These styles add to the leader's arsenal of leadership styles that can be used to shape behavior, emotions, and the organizational climate.

FM 22-100 stresses that leaders must be able to adjust their leadership style to the situation as well as to the people being led. Leaders are not limited to one style in a given situation and, with the nature of the battlefield today and tomorrow, being able to adapt appropriate styles will influence soldiers' success. Techniques from different styles are used to motivate people and accomplish the mission. A leader's judgment, intelligence, cultural awareness, and self-control "play major roles in helping you choose the proper style and the appropriate techniques for the task at hand."[3]

The Army has pursued the idea of adaptive leadership since the formation of the Continental Army. Because organization, control, discipline, and teamwork were lacking, General George Washington sought the aid of Baron Frederich von Steuben, a former Prussian staff officer of Frederick the Great, to write drill movements and regulations to instill discipline in "an Army of several thousand half-starved, wretched men in rags."[4] From the beginning of U.S. military psychology almost 100 years ago, there has been a preoccupation with predicting effective military behavior, particularly in leaders. Most of the early military classification and qualification tests sought to predict behavior under the common assumption that certain ideal behavior would inevitably lead to highly desirable performance as a leader.[5]

Military leaders must make use of the studies and histories of military units and figures, and not repeat mistakes of the past.[6] Leaders should learn from the past and focus on issues that concern soldiers simultaneously with mission accomplishment. Leadership effectiveness cannot be overemphasized in leader development and training, especially leader effectiveness in combat. Military leadership studies must focus on military leadership instead of man-

agement. Behaviors of corporate managerial leaders do not correlate directly to the behaviors of military leaders although the correlation has been assumed in military leader development programs. Modern military training for combat leaders tends to stress the managerial functions of the officer and his abilities to manage materiel and personnel. This managerial training generally receives greater emphasis than tactics.[7]

Military leaders are different from leaders in other types of organizations because they are appointed and not emergent.[8] The military leader's authority to lead derives from the Constitution. If he cannot pull his followers by force of character, he can push them by force of law. Military leadership is essentially autocratic and operates in a wheel rather than an all-channel communication net. The flow of communication, or essential information, is between the leader and his subordinates rather than among all the members of his group. The wheel net, though no doubt gratifying to autocratic leaders, produces more errors, slower solutions, and reduced gratification to the group than does the more democratic all-channel net. Effective leaders are able to adjust communication flow by adapting situationally appropriate leadership styles.

In light of these considerations, military leadership has been effective. The military leader, like any other leader, has two roles: the task specialist and the social specialist. His primary concern is to achieve the group's goal of defeating an enemy in combat. For such a role, being likable is a less-important trait than being more active, more intelligent, or better informed than his followers. As a social specialist, a leader's main function is preserving good personal relations within the group, maintaining morale, and keeping the group intact. In a military environment, the functions of a successful social specialist prevent mutiny and reduce such symptoms of low morale such as absenteeism, desertion, malingering, and crime. The social function achieves cohesion as a team or unit. The ideal military leader combines excellence as a task specialist with an equal flair for social or heroic leadership.

Predictors of successful combat leadership include having first-level leadership experience, time in the unit, unit relationships, job knowledge, and the concomitant security of knowing the right thing to do. All these lead to the confidence required to perform well under threatening conditions.[9] Social support is more important for successful and effective leadership at lower levels than at higher ones. The characteristics that earmark the effective combat leader may not be the same as those that identify the appointed leader.[10]

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T.O. Jacobs contends that battlefield leaders must know the dynamics of Army rules to meet challenges and produce untried solutions. The leader must continuously seek alternatives to apply to new situations. Leaders at lower levels must have more initiative and foresight and decreased sensitivity to rank differences. This shifts the leader's focus from who is right to what is right, an adaptive view that relies on information to meet technical challenges. Leaders all levels must possess higher technical competence and have the ability to apply that expertise while maintaining cohesive units.[11]

Because of stress in the military environment, leaders must generate high unit cohesion before hostilities begin. Leaders must be able to operate autonomously, building respect and values for maintaining the purpose and will of their units in combat. They need greater flexibility and adaptability to deal with surprise. Units must be able to operate expediently to meet the challenge of unanticipated events. Flexibility must be a unit norm and an individual characteristic. Also, units must have the opportunity to train in unfamiliar situations, to learn from mistakes, and to learn the process of thorough thinking so that the initial shock of combat stress does not cause cognitive freezing.

Leaders must have the capacity to create a climate for more junior leaders that permits rational risk-taking. The climate must foster training, coaching, and developing subordinate leaders.[12] The increasing level of sophistication in military hardware, tactics, and techniques require the military leader to empower the subordinate to take on more complex tasks with fewer resources.[13] The leader must be aware of power and politics, which previously have been a prerequisite for only the most senior leaders.[14]

Early opportunities for varied responsibilities support leader development in the Army, and the Army does this better than any other institution, especially among junior and noncommissioned officers (NCOs). However, the private sector left the Army behind in the use of developmental feedback from peers and subordinates.[15]

To improve leadership, one must define an effective leader. An effective leader should be someone who exercises transactional leadership and puts leadership theory into practice. There must be a focus on selecting programs that identify personal leadership traits related to leader effectiveness.

Leaders can improve by combining conceptual training, developmental feedback, an environment for continuous learning, a performance appraisal system that attends to both development and selection, and a system of promoting leaders based on more than written reports. This combination has proven effective in the private sector but is deficient in developing military leaders in the field.

To improve leadership, one must define an effective leader. An effective leader should be someone who exercises transactional leadership and puts leadership theory into practice.[16] There must be a focus on selecting programs that identify personal leadership traits related to leader effectiveness. The concept of leadership that most consistently matches the military ideal seems to emphasize transformational leadership training.

The common themes of military leadership training are a focus on contingency leadership principles, followership that precedes leadership activities, leadership experiences combined with feedback, and formal classroom training designed to provide the theoretical basis for leadership experiences. A variety of empirical studies have demonstrated that transformational leadership augments or supplements transactional leadership, and training in that area would be a beneficial addition to leadership training programs.[17]

Personal traits, attitudes, values, and past experience influence leadership style and performance. Situational factors and the ability and motivation of one's followers also influence leadership style and performance. A leader must correctly assess situational factors and adapt the most appropriate and effective leadership style for that situation. A leader must also augment transactional leadership behavior with transformational behavior to impact his followers significantly.[18]

James Hunt and John Blair describe in their heuristic model the elements that impact today's military leaders.[19] As shown in Figure 1, the model is designed to promote understanding of the key leadership characteristics on the future battlefield and the magnitude of their implications for soldiers, commanders, and for the Army as an organization. The model includes environmental and organizational factors (macrocontingency factors); those situational factors specific to a unit, task and individual (microcontingency factors); and a range of individual and unit effectiveness outcomes. The model recognizes the situational variables impacting leaders and their effect on the battlefield.

Situational Leadership Theory

Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) has been used by the military services for years in leader training and development.[20] It includes dynamics of the heuristic model and addresses the needs of military leaders.[21] SLT emphasizes the combination of task and social specialist, and active situational leadership versus management.[22] SLT also addresses leadership style and performance issues.[23]

All military services have based the tenets of leadership on the SLT leadership model.[24] During the 1970s and 1980s, the Army used SLT and the leadership effectiveness and adaptability description instruments as leader development tools for organizational effectiveness staff officers. The U.S. Air Force uses the model in most of its leadership training for officers and NCOs.

Although Hersey and Blanchard's SLT and Hunt and Blair's heuristic model have utility in leadership training, David D. Van Fleet and Gary Yukl warn, "great care should be taken when attempting to generalize any leadership theory developed for business organizations or military. To be useful within military organizations, a leadership theory must have been demonstrated to fit those organizations."[25] The same holds true about generalizing

Figure 1. Heuristic Model of Leadership (Hunt and Blair, 1985)

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The military leader, like any other leader, has two roles: the task specialist and the social specialist. His primary concern is to achieve the group's goal of defeating an enemy in combat. For such a role, being likable is a less important trait than being more active, more intelligent, or better informed than his followers.

across military organizations, such as drill and nondrill situations and combat and noncombat situations, as well as combat and administrative or support units. Other caveats include the distinction among sea, land, and air services, and unit size or organizational level. Four military studies—two combat and two noncombat settings—using a taxonomy of 23 leadership behaviors, revealed that "it was evident that the relative importance of different leader behaviors depended to a great extent on the nature of the situation."[26] The 1990 FM 22-100 contained the principles of SLT and the situational factors of the leader, the led, the situation, and communication which indicates the appropriateness of the military setting for testing SLT and its inclusion as a model in leadership training.[27]

SLT was derived from the Life Cycle Theory of Leadership to develop a conceptual framework to pinpoint key situational variables. It uses as its basic data a leader's daily perception and observation of his environment rather than research data. The theory was designed for the practitioner's use.

In SLT, leader/follower relationships are not necessarily hierarchical. Any reference to leader or follower implies potential leader and potential follower. The concepts are intended to apply regardless of attempts to influence a subordinate's behavior, the boss, an associate, a friend, or relative.

Current SLT defines maturity as the capacity to set high but attainable goals (achievement motivation), willingness and ability to take responsibility, and education and experience of the individual or a group. These variables of maturity relate only to a specific task to be performed.[28] People are more or less mature in relation to a specific task, function, or objective that a leader wants to accomplish. Individuals in the group are not necessarily at the same maturity level. The differences between education and experience are minimal, with education being learned in a formal classroom and experience learned on the job.

Responsibility has dual factors of willingness and ability. There are four combinations of these two factors: individuals who are neither willing nor able to take responsibility; individuals who are willing but not able to take responsibility; individuals who are able but not willing to take responsibility; and those who are both willing and able to take responsibility. The highest maturity level is the last combination. In terms of task-relevant maturity, Hersey and Blanchard emphasize job maturity as the ability and technical knowledge to do the task and psychological maturity as self-confidence and self-respect. The theory "focuses on the appropriateness or effectiveness of leadership styles according to the task-relevant maturity of the followers."[29] Hersey and Blanchard illustrate this cycle with a bell-shaped curve going through the four leadership quadrants of the effectiveness dimension of the tridimensional leader effectiveness model.

The situational leadership model rests on two concepts: one, that leader effectiveness results from using a behavioral style that is appropriate to the demands of the environment; and two, that leader effectiveness depends on learning to diagnose that

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environment.[30] Diagnosing the environment is the first of the three competencies of leadership.[32] Adapting to the environment with the appropriate leadership style and communicating that style to subordinates are the other two leader competencies.

Environmental variables, except job demands, have two major components: style and expectations. Style is defined as consistent behavior the leader uses when working with and through other people, as perceived by those people. Expectations are defined as the perceptions of appropriate behavior for one's own role or the roles of others within the organization. Expectations define what individuals in organizations should do in various circumstances and how they think others—supervisors, peers, and followers—should act in their positions.[32]

Appropriate leadership style is determined by the leader's assessment of an individual's maturity level relative to the task at hand. Once the leader identifies the maturity level, he can identify the appropriate leadership style (the curve determines the appropriate leadership style). Fundamental to the theory is the leader's ability to adjust his style to meet the maturity of the followers. The indication that the leader is using the appropriate style will be performance or results.

A major criticism of SLT has been its definition of maturity.[33] In more recent SLT models, follower maturity is replaced with follower readiness. Like maturity, readiness is defined as the "extent to which a follower demonstrates the ability and willingness to accomplish a specific task."[34] Other than the change in terminology, the components of readiness and maturity are basically the same.

In the 1996 edition of *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*, the continuum of follower readiness is expanded to include behavioral indicators of the four readiness levels.[35] This is yet another tool to assess the ability and competence, or motivation, of followers and offers the leader clues to diagnose the situation correctly.

The expanded situational leadership model in Figure 2 shows the relationship of leader behavior or style to subordinate readiness. The model also offers pertinent definitions.[36] In practical applications of the model, a leader's number one error is incorrectly diagnosing a person who is inse-

cure or apprehensive as being unmotivated.[37] Willingness is the combination of confidence, commitment, and motivation. Ability is the knowledge, experience, and demonstrated skill that the follower brings to the task and is based on an actual display of ability. Leaders should not select a leadership style by assuming what the followers should know.

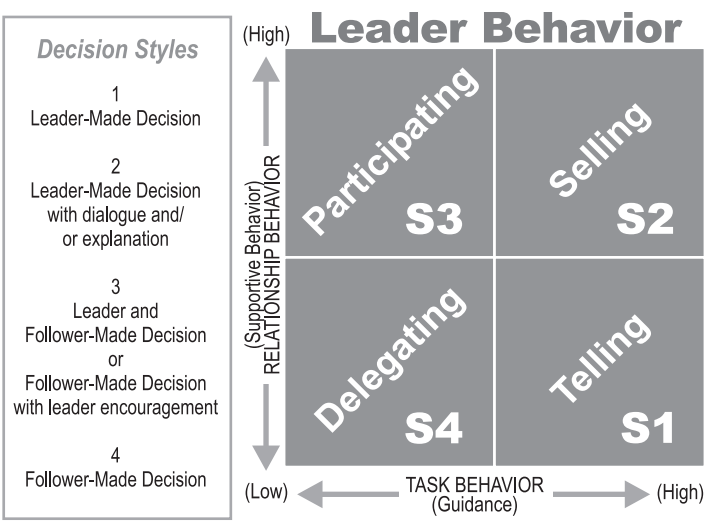
In situational leadership, the follower determines the appropriate leader behavior. Situational leadership attempts to "improve the odds that managers will be able to become effective and successful leaders."[38] A leader's effectiveness depends on the person's or group's readiness level. In the expanded situational leadership model, the leader diagnoses the level of readiness, adapts the appropriate high-probability leadership style, and communicates the style to influence behavior effectively. The leader helps the follower grow in readiness by adjusting leadership behavior through the four styles along the leadership curve. The leader accomplishes this growth in readiness by reinforcing successive approximations of the desired behavior. The style is appropriate only as far as the followers are productive. Change may occur in the maturity level of the follower, new technology may be introduced in the organization, or a structural change may occur requiring the leader to move backward on the curve to provide the appropriate level of support and direction.

The leader makes several decisions in determining the appropriate leadership style. The first is the objective and the individual or group activities that the leader wants to influence. The next is determining the group's readiness level, followed by determining the appropriate leadership style. The leader then assesses results and reassesses the accomplishment of objectives and determines if further leadership is indicated. If there is a gap between expected performance and actual performance, then additional leadership interventions are in order and the cycle is repeated. Tasks, readiness, and results are dynamic, and leadership is a full-time job.

Various groups and organizations have used SLT for more than 25 years. More than one million leaders receive SLT training annually. Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson use the research of R.A. Gumpert and R.K. Hambleton as evidence of SLT's effectiveness.[39] The results of that research support the utility of the managerial development theory in Gumpert and Hambleton's research. Managers trained in SLT do better under conditions of change than managers who are not.

Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson write that the basic principles of the model have not changed since the theory's inception in the 1960s, and there is even greater emphasis recently on the task or the activity the leader is attempting to impact.[40] SLT is not as much about leadership as about meeting follower needs. This task-specific focus of the model is the primary reason that the followers' maturity gives way to task the followers' readiness.

Although the model is still evolving and Hersey and Blanchard continue to collaborate on refining SLT, they went their separate ways in 1979. Hersey still calls his model SLT, using the concepts and descriptors discussed here. Blanchard and his associates call their version of the model SLTII, and they focus more on developing groups and teams.



Follower Readiness

High	Moderate		Low
R4	R3	R2	R1
Able and Willing (Confident)	Able but Unwilling (Insecure)	Unable but Willing (Confident)	Unable and Unwilling (Insecure)
FOLLOWER DIRECTED		LEADER DIRECTED	

Figure 2. Expanded Situational Leadership Model
(Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson, 1996)

All military services have based the tenets of leadership on the SLT leadership model. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Army used SLT and the leadership effectiveness and adaptability description instruments as leader-development tools for organizational effective staff officers. The U.S. Air Force uses the model in most of its leadership training for officers and NCOs.

Maturity and readiness in SLTII are labeled development (D1, D2, D3, and D4). Those stages of development are orientation, dissatisfaction, resolution, and production. Individual growth goes from the enthusiastic beginner, to the disillusioned learner, to the capable but cautious performer, and finally to the self-directed achiever. Leadership styles, which move the followers from the stages of developing to developed, are directing (S1); coaching (S2); supporting (S3); and delegating (S4). The principles of SLT are otherwise used the same in SLTII.[41]

Military Applications

Hersey and Blanchard's 1969 theory is practical and easy to understand, but its widespread use calls for in-depth empirical testing to determine its validity as a tool for leaders to impact an organization and people in the organization. The theory's principles have been studied in various organizations, from corporations to schools to churches, but there is little literature on military use. Using a military sample to test the theory would extend the body of knowledge on SLT and leadership research in general and test the model using a different organization.[42]

In a recent study conducted in a U.S. Army National Guard air assault battalion, the premises of the theory were supported although statistical support of the model's primary assertions were not supported.[43] The study tested Hersey and Blanchard's 1996 SLT in a military population using the instruments developed for the theory. This study is significant because it uses the military environment to test SLT by using a research design that incorporates leadership effectiveness and adaptability descriptions (LEAD) and readiness scale instruments originally developed for SLT. The design uses the leader style/subordinate maturity match, outcome measures of performance, satisfaction with supervision, and job satisfaction. The military environment provides a clear delineation of relationships between subordinate and superior relationships where the superior is responsible for developing subordinate's maturity. The study uses a 360-degree evaluation of the perceptions of leader effectiveness and provides an organizational leadership effectiveness average or composite that is correlated with the outcome measures.

Feedback on the leader's effectiveness is provided with self, peer, and subordinate as well as superior evaluations. The military services use this type of feedback for leader training in academic settings but not in the field or fleet.

In a study at the U.S. Naval Academy, anonymous feedback provided to upperclassmen resulted in lower discrepancies between self-ratings and subordinate ratings of transformational leadership and has improved subsequent leader performance.[44] Leadership performance is improved through education and experience. Feedback from followers, peers, and superiors is important to improve leadership performance.[45]

Leadership effectiveness and its impact on unit morale and cohesion are assessed in this study as an outcome measure using a job description index (JDI) and an organizational climate survey. The Army does not routinely use climate surveys, although it frequently collects data on equipment and financial readiness. The absence of a parallel reporting emphasis on the state of the human element relegates that aspect of combat readiness to a secondary position.[46]

The data shows that the outcome measures employed indicate that the leadership is performing effectively and that satisfaction with supervision, the job, and the organization is high. Leaders considering the readiness or maturity level of subordinates are employing the appropriate leadership style. These trends seem to support SLT, but statistical tests indicate otherwise. Given leadership effectiveness in this situation, the leaders are unable to adjust their styles to developmentally improve the readiness of the unit. The predominant leadership style in the organization is style 2 (sell). The adaptability score indicates adaptability of leaders to use situationally appropriate leadership styles. The adaptability score in this example shows that leaders in this organization do not vary their style appropriately to the readiness levels of the follower.

Readiness scores indicate a relatively high readiness among respondents. The score is above the level of R3, defined as a level where subordinates are able to complete the tasks but are not willing. Although the best leader style in this situation is S3 (participate), the probability of success using style S2 (sell) is high while success with S4 (delegate) is

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To develop subordinates to become effective leaders and operate as cohesive teams, leaders must be adaptable in their own leadership styles to move toward participative leadership, then empower the subordinate through delegation of authority. The ability to recognize the importance of the leader being active in developing the subordinates to an R4 state, where empowerment is practical, is the utility of the situational leadership model.

not as high.[47] The probability of success using S2 with R3 in this example may explain the positive results of outcome measures.

Performance scores indicate a high level of performance corresponding to the high level of subordinate readiness. The job in general (JIG) and the JDI, also employed in this study, indicate high job satisfaction and satisfaction with leaders. The organizational climate survey and the strength management and attrition model also indicate high-profile averages in areas of leadership, to include NCO and officer leadership, accessibility to leaders, and unit cohesiveness. Time in the organization, in the same military occupational specialty, and with the same supervisor contributed to readiness levels and high scores on satisfaction scales. Respondents were mature and well educated. Matching subordinate's leadership style with the readiness level the results in greater leader effectiveness, with a subsequent increase in the outcome measures of performance and satisfaction.

Correlations and statistical analyses show support for SLT's interaction between style and readiness match, and performance but not with results of the JDI or JIG. The findings of this study verify what C.F. Fernandez and Robert P. Vecchio concluded in their research on SLT.[48] The statistical techniques used offer little supporting evidence for situational leadership even using LEAD and the readiness scales designed for situational leadership.

Implications for Leadership Training

FM 22-100 states that "effective leaders are flexible enough to adjust their leadership style and techniques to the people they lead. Some subordinates respond best to coaxing, suggestions, or gentle prodding; others need, and even want at times, the verbal equivalent of a kick in the pants."[49] Where leaders use style S2 (sell), subordinates are involved in decisionmaking to the extent that they provide information about the decision. The decision is still the leader's; however, even subordinates' limited involvement in decisionmaking gives them some ownership in the decision, raising their level of commitment to it. The S2 style is appropriate for moderately competent subordinates who support organizational goals. In this example, the respondents'

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readiness level is R3 where subordinates are able but not willing. They have the knowledge and ability to do the task but are reluctant to complete it on their own, and feedback in task performance is solicited.[50] When the leadership style is nearly optimal, given subordinates' readiness, a key is how much better the overall outcome measures would fare if the leader had greater flexibility to change his style as the situation allows. The change from a more directive style to one where the subordinates are self-sufficient is the basis of Army leadership in developing subordinates. FM 22-100 states that "in order to get their best performance, you must figure out what your subordinates need and what they are able to do—even when they don't know themselves."[51] The manual goes on to say that "competent leaders mix elements of all these styles to match to the place, task and people involved. . . . If you can use only one leadership style, you're inflexible and will have difficulty operating in situations where that style doesn't fit."[52]

Although the data in this research does not support the precepts of SLT, the outcomes of performance and satisfaction, given the readiness level of R3, indicate effectiveness of the leader in a static style readiness even though adaptability is low. B.R. Cook finds that U.S. Air Force officers agree that they have one leadership style and are overly reliant on that style.[53] That style is also predominantly S2. The U.S. Air Force uses SLT extensively in its leadership training and has most adequately investigated the model's shortcomings. A 1994 review of SLT by the Air University Leadership and Management Program Advisory Group found that, while the general feeling is that the model is useful, there are some significant limitations. The SLT model does a good job highlighting the appropriate leadership style based on follower maturity but does not adequately address other military considerations. These include the level at which leadership is exercised; different styles that may be required because of combat demands; staff versus operational leadership; or differing styles appropriate to service, joint, or combined leadership.

Leaders may not recognize situations where different leadership styles are more appropriate or may not have the skills necessary to apply the appropriate behaviors where delegation or a more directive style is more effective. The key factor underlying SLT is the ability of the leader to adjust styles to meet the subordinates' maturity demands. Whether or not the leader is using the appropriate styles should be seen in the unit's outcomes.[54]

FM 22-100 incorporates transformational and transactional leadership styles in addition to the three styles—directing, participating, and delegating—in the older version.[55] The transformational leadership style focuses on inspiration and change and allows the leader to take advantage of the skills and knowledge of experienced subordinates. This style is appropriate for the R3 and R4 readiness levels where subordinates are the most ready. The transactional style focuses on rewards and punishments. The leader only evokes short-term commitment from subordinates. This style is not developmental, discourages the subordinates from risk-taking or innovation, and is only marginally appropriate for the R1 readiness level. FM 22-100 advocates combining the two styles or using techniques from the two styles to fit the situation. The intent of combining styles is the same as a leader's flexibility in using the appropriate style of leadership.[56]

Several studies have emphasized the training value of SLT. In the military environment, the ultimate goal of effective leadership is to accomplish the mission. Subordinate leaders gain experience, knowledge, and skills to be accountable for their actions as senior leaders delegate to them the authority to influence. The leader's effectiveness based on outcomes similar to this study can assess the training value of SLT, particularly the effectiveness dimension where leaders recognize the appropriate leader style to use in different situations.

At one time, Army recruiters filled manpower needs by focusing on high school students who dreamed of military service and a free college education. The Army's operational tempo has increased to the point that the Army is not meeting its manpower needs, and it cannot fill short-term needs fast enough by waiting for high school seniors to graduate. Newly recruited soldiers are being trained and assigned to operational units within months. With soldiers deployed to 65 different countries, the challenge of being ready to handle these immense, continuous worldwide deployments to meet operational and strategic needs is an Army leadership priority. The military is portrayed as overworked, underpaid,

and underresourced. Reports have suggested flaws in the Army's leadership as the cause. Leader-development programs—or the lack thereof—and promotion systems are not up to the task of getting the right people in the right jobs with the momentum to effect change.[57] The propensity for military service among young people has dropped, so recruiters pitch enticements that include sizable bonuses to attract young men and women.

Following the recruiting challenge comes the retention challenge. Deployment burnout, doing more with less, and the new Army culture's lack of support for family togetherness has soldiers leaving the Army. With a strong economy, soldiers who leave the service are not afraid of being jobless, and a new Army program guarantees positions in major corporations for recruits who complete their enlistments. Retention is a morale and cohesion issue, both of which are outcomes of effective leadership.[58]

Former U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Dennis J. Reimer stated that "with the current leadership doctrine and the tradition of leaders who truly care about soldiers, these challenges can turn into tomorrow's opportunities."[59] Leadership is an essential element of combat power and cannot be left to chance. Leader development must be carefully planned and executed just like any other operation. Lieutenant Colonel Donald M. Craig describes a leader development model consisting of three pillars: institutional training and education where skills are acquired as well as knowledge to perform duty position requirements; operational assignments to refine the leaders' skills, broadening his knowledge and shaping behavior and skills; and self-development, where leaders grow from learning, experience, and personal study.[60] This model is an amplified version of Department of the Army Pamphlet 350-58, *Leader Development for America's Army*.[61]

Important in this leader development process is feedback from peers, subordinates, and supervisors as well as continuous self-assessment. The thorough study of other leaders provides leaders a perspective to analyze effectiveness and to take what works and incorporate it into their own self-development process. Critical leader development includes a thorough understanding of subordinates' strengths, weaknesses, and professional goals. The leader must be aware of his subordinates' readiness.

Colonel Maureen Leboeuf includes empowerment along with formal schooling and leadership training in her leader development philosophy.[62] Empowerment is one of the hardest tasks for leaders to master because it means delegating authority. Delegation encourages leadership growth within the organization. Leaders developing leaders has always been the Army's leader development philosophy, the basics of which are learned in one-on-one situations or in small groups or teams. The critical leadership task in combat becomes motivating soldiers. Motivation includes morale factors, the key to which is unit cohesion. The Army does not stress the linkage among leadership, morale, and combat motivation.

Environmental variables . . . have two major components: style and expectations. Style is defined as consistent behavior that the leader uses when working with and through other people, as perceived by those people. Expectations are defined as the perceptions of appropriate behavior for one's own role or the roles of others within the organization.

Some of this morale building in a combat environment is done through communication: informing soldiers during combat of the actual situation to alleviate fear caused by the unknown.[63] Hersey and Blanchard's 1988 SLT includes leaders using the appropriate leadership style relative to subordinates' readiness.[64] That style gradually moves to less task and less relationship behaviors as the subordinate is more willing and able to complete the task. SLT stresses communicating that leadership style to the subordinate.

To develop subordinates to become effective leaders and operate as cohesive teams, leaders must be adaptable in their own leadership styles to move toward participative leadership, then empower the subordinate through delegation of authority. The ability to recognize the importance of the leader being active in developing the subordinates to an R4 state, where empowerment is practical, is the utility of the situational leadership model.[65]

Adding transactional and transformational leadership to directing, participating, and delegating leadership clarifies SLT in Army leadership. Transformational leadership is the long-term state of leadership in Army units where the S4-R4 style/readiness match exists.

Transactional leadership is used only short-term in situations where there is no time to react to other than directive leadership. Examples of these situations include safety and underfire issues.

Choosing to use directive leadership or delegation involves more situational factors than the readiness of the subordinates. The appropriate style

changes as the leadership environment changes. Combat requires more unified and more autocratic leadership. The interaction between commanders and subordinate leaders is verbal and informal. On the other hand, the staff leader's style is bureaucratic and participative, and the interaction between staff members is written and formal. The level and type of the organization also affect style.

Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson incorporate SLT in crisis leadership situations such as combat, staff operations management, transformational leadership, and performance management.[66] They treat these all as situations where the style of leadership is adapted appropriately for optimal effectiveness. These authors advocate that the limitations of the model brought out by the military services are situational opportunities to apply their theory.

Situational leadership is a popular and widely used model that emphasizes using more than one leadership style, particularly in developing subordinates in the military. It assumes that as subordinates gain training, experience, and guidance, they will be better prepared to accomplish the goals of the organization with less leader influence. Eventually, the subordinate will be the leader. It is a complex model with complex variables. Leadership and leader styles are concepts that defy definition. Follower readiness is a multifaceted dimension that is difficult to measure. The situational leadership model continues to be used in the military services as a training vehicle in virtually all formal leadership training programs.[67] ***MR***

NOTES

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